

Vol 1, no 1

From The Maren Carden Collection

Jan. 1975

Dear Sisters,

Blacks have been accused repeatedly of disunity--we can never seem to get ourselves together and accomplish anything for our own good. Some of us black women, realizing the need to see ourselves, hear ourselves, be ourselves, and find out who we are, came together to form the National Black Feminist Organization.

As an organization, we have taken two giant steps in the direction of national unity--the Second National Meeting, slated for March 28-30, and the inauguration of the N.B.F.O. Newsletter. Future issues of the newsletter will contain news from sisters across the U.S. It will be your "Black Grapevine."

Traditionally, "black" has been synonymous with "poor." As black women, we are doubly burdened by the stigma and the reality of poverty. As feminists, we are striving to be self-sufficient individuals, supporting each other through sisterhood.

The N.B.F.O. has no financial resources, at this time, except the contributions of its members. Financial strain has previously limited our ability to communicate with the vast numbers of members across the country. If all members paid their dues and supported this newsletter, our nationally-elected Coordinating Council would be a mere 10¢ stamp away from all of us.

The N.B.F.O. is in its second year. We cannot continue as a string of isolated groups; regional branches must communicate with each other in order for national unity to grow.

In Sisterhood,

Patricia Arnold  
June Murray Gill  
Amelia Headland  
Judith Wilson



# NATIONAL MEETING

→ Your Second National Meeting of the National Black Feminist Organization will be held on March 28-30, 1975 in Detroit. Please let us know now if you will need housing and/or child care. If you are a member of a chapter please begin thinking about designating possible delegates who will represent you in the voting on issues of policy concerning organizational structure, organization of chapters, national elections and national functioning. We would also like to include issues that you feel should be discussed at the national meeting, so please let us know what they are as soon as possible. You will be receiving a more detailed letter regarding the national meeting, but we must know how many women plan to attend. Direct all your letters of suggestions or inquiries to Ms. Elizabeth Bell, NBFO 285 Madison Ave. New York, N.Y. 10017 Rm 1720

# NATIONAL ELECTIONS

The National elections were held for members to the Coordinating Council on Oct. 31, 1974. The following persons were elected, and their duties are: Dorothy King-fund raising committee; Jane Galvin-Lewis-coordinator of out of town groups; Elizabeth Bell-co-coordinator of national meetings; Deborah Singletary-group coordination, consciousness-raising and monthly program committee organizer; Inez Singletary Turner-monthly meeting program coordinator; Diane Lacey-co-coordinator of national meetings and conferences; Doreen McGill-office coordinator. The Council then interviewed and accepted two supporting members: June Murray Gill-secretary; and Patricia Arnold-treasurer. Other Committees of interest and active membership are; the Rape Committee-Elizabeth Bell coordinator; the Creative Writer's Workshop; Media-Dorothy Robinson coordinator; Beverly Davis co-coordinates the consciousness-raising groups. More committees of stressed interest include Women in Prison and Drug Related Issues-both coordinated by Eleanor Williams; and Education-Dorothy King coordinator. Efforts to continue our Child Care and Single Parents committees are being made by NBFO-more help is always needed...

# Check it out...

✓ The Food and Drug Administration has lifted a six-month moratorium on the intra-uterine device called the Dalkon Shield. During the six-month period public health clinics have "recalled" women who were using the device. Upon returning, women were advised to use another form of birth control. Many of the women who utilize public health centers are black women.

Dr. Alexander Schmidt, Commissioner of Food and Drugs said his agency and the manufacturer, the A. H. Robins Company, will keep a registry of all women using the Dalkon Shield. Dr. Schmidt also called upon other manufacturers of the device to participate in the registry. The Dalkon Shield, the newest I.U.D. discovery, has been linked to 14 deaths. Schmidt said certain questions of safety cannot be answered until further tests are conducted.

In response to the F.D.A. announcement the Planned Parenthood Federation of America said it would continue its ban on the Dalkon Shield. According to F.D.A figures four million women are presently using a intra-uterine device.

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Ms. Doris Janos Freed, a family law attorney said there is an increase of "no fault" as an additional ground or as the only ground for marital dissolution divorce. According to Ms. Freed "just five states remain with pure fault (eg. Adultery, cruelty) as grounds for divorce."

\* \* \*

*legislative/liberal coalition w/ ? members involved w/ ?*

New York State's Women's Lobby is going to Albany the 21st of January. The organization is hoping to get a lot of equal rights bills put through. Issues such as divorce, abortion, collective bargaining for household workers, rape, child-care, sexual privacy and the Equal Rights Amendment are just a few of the Women's Lobby legislature priorities.

The NBFO Newsletter wants to know about legislature advances in your state. Send news of National and personal interest to NBFO Newsletter: 285 Madison Ave. Rm. 1720, NYC, NY 10017 Amelia Headley

# Help Us Help You!

## Subscriptions:

The National Black Feminist Organization wants to bring sisterhood closer to you. You'll never feel out of touch with other black feminists if you subscribe to the N.B.F.O. Newsletter.

Do you know who to contact for information about the N.B.F.O. in North Carolina, Detroit, California or Boston?

Do you want to locate other black feminists in your area?

Do you know the latest news about abortion, divorce, and equal employment opportunities?

Do you know how to get help in fighting rape, drug abuse, or conditions in women's prisons?

Do you know what black feminists are doing in the areas of creative writing, media, or finance?

Do you know what Patti Labelle, Florynce Kennedy, and Eleanor Holmes Norton think about feminism?

This month's N.B.F.O. Newsletter and future issues will provide you with answers to these questions and many more. Subscribe to the N.B.F.O. Newsletter because we can keep you in touch with the issues and information that interest you as a black feminist.

If we seem to cost a little more and give you many pages less, it's because we don't have the money to be an Essence, Ebony, Encore, or Ms. But, we have something special to give, that you won't find in your daily newspaper, on T.V., or in any other publication.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES AND INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW IN NEXT ISSUE.

# You Are the NBFO ...

## Membership Dues:

The National Black Feminist Organization needs your dues. Our first national conference was held in November 1973, with the help of the Lucius and Eva Eastman Foundation. This pilot issue of the N.B.F.O. Newsletter was also made possible by the Eastman Foundation. But, this newsletter will not survive unless you pay its way now that we've been given a start. Our second national conference has no foundation funding, nor does our national office have any outside funding to cover phone bills, postage, or office supplies. ↙

The N.B.F.O. depends on your membership dues in order to continue spreading black feminism and lend support to black women across the nation. The following amounts are suggested for a year's membership:

ANNUAL INCOME		SUGGESTED DUES
Under \$	6,000	\$ 2
Up to	7,000	3
" "	8,000	5
" "	9,000	7
" "	10,000	10
" "	11,000	13
" "	12,000	16
" "	13,000	19
" "	14,000	23
" "	15,000	25
" "	20,000	50

*sliding scale*

Give as you feel is appropriate. Your card will be marked "paid" only with no amount noted. Remember, a contribution to the N.B.F.O. is a contribution to black women's future.



## interview with

### Eleanor Holmes Norton

Judith Wilson

Unemployment cast gloom on Christmas '74 for many black families. Two days later I interviewed Eleanor Holmes Norton, Chairperson of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, a founding member of the National Black Feminist Organization. I found her, in a subdued lavender dress, dividing her lunch hour between chicken parts, persistent phone calls and me.

Considering the effect of the current recession on jobs for minorities and women, she reflects: "No one knows precisely what will happen to Affirmative Action in the context of scarce resources and opportunities." Yet, she adds, there have been several court decisions "specifically barring lay-offs that have a disproportionate impact on women and minorities."

Although Commissioner Holmes Norton's office is already handling discrimination complaints regarding lay-offs, she has not lost sight of the larger context--the federal government's 28-year old commitment to full employment. She believes that activating this commitment through job programs, "could eliminate the sick welfare system that I think has an especially detrimental effect on black women." She sees the black woman as "the center" of the black family and the black community. Feminism stimulates black people to concentrate on these women who have held the black family together despite all adversity, and "provides a key to turning around this situation."

She concludes by dispelling one of the frequent criticisms of black feminism and affirmative action programs--the notion that black women constitute an economic threat to black men. "They're not dealing in the same arena. At the top of our salary structure are the white men, second are black men, third are white women, and fourth are black women. Competition between black men and black women is kind of laughable. The greatest proportion of black women, by far, are found in two occupations--domestic and clerical work. So competition between black men and black women is just not a real factor."

"In our affirmative action program, competition is impossible because we give goals and timetables based on the specific group, so you can't use a black woman to fill a job that a black man would fill or vice versa." She adds, however, that some agencies do allow the use of black female employees to fill two affirmative action categories, thinking that "since the black woman has been disproportionately discriminated against, it's alright to use two-for-one." But, Eleanor Holmes Norton's office does not accept this practice "because we think that it turns Affirmative Action into a hustle."

## BLACK GRAPEVINE

ATLANTA: Mainly working on building their group into a constructive unit. Serious issues are consciousness-raising, and interest in new members. Hoping to send a representative to Detroit in March. Address: Sandra Holland Flowers, NBFO 528 Beckwith Court S.W. Atlanta, Ga. 30314 404-688-5184

BUFFALO: Feminists united to fight unemployment. Dealing with consciousness-raising-helping Black women build a positive identity. Seeking more members to

strengthen their unit--not limited to just Buffalo--all upstate N.Y. Black women are welcome to join them.

Address: Margaret Snell Kozak, NBFO 179 Jersey Street, Buffalo, NY 14201 716-881-6184

KANSAS CITY: Has been meeting since May. Working with the E.R.A. Coalition of Mo. Working on International Woman's Year. Has been invited to speak by various local organizations, including the Environmental Protection Agency. Involved in the Women's

Political Caucus. Hopes to work with the Radical Feminists on rape issues. Involved in the Big Sisters/Little Sisters Program. Address: N.B.F.O. - Kansas City 72-47 Wyandotte, Kansas City, Mo. 64114

LOS ANGELES: Meeting since Jan. 5, 1975. Still getting together consciousness-raising groups. Lots of exciting plans being made—including sending someone to Detroit in March if \$ is available. Open to all new members.

Address: Bernice Mattingly, NBFO (#6)  
3406 Garden Ave. Los Angeles, Ca. 90039  
213-664-9763

PHILADELPHIA: Working on International Woman's Year. Working on a project dealing with the contributions of minority women in the Delaware Valley. Trying to get info about job training and incentives for minority women. Starting a campaign against the U.S.O. Has been meeting since May. Address: N.B.F.O. - Philadelphia %Pennsylvania Women's Center, Logan Hall Univ. of Pa. Philadelphia, Pa. 19104

RALEIGH: Has been meeting since Sept. Thinking about consciousness-raising.  
Address: Beverly Mitchell, NBFO  
1110 Schaub Dr. #H  
Raleigh, North Carolina

WASHINGTON: formed the Washington Area Federal Feminists Credit Union in cooper-

ation with N.O.W. and the Women's Center. Has been meeting since June '74. Involved in consciousness-raising, including a retreat from Nov. 22-24-'74, at which workshops were presented covering "the black man and the black woman," "black women in media," "raising the black family" and "feeling sensitivity." Add: N.B.F.O. P.O. 3086, Washington, D. C. 20009

WESTCHESTER: has been meeting since March '74. Hopes to sponsor a booth at the Afro-American Exposition during Negro History Week. Hopes to sponsor a booth at the County Women's Task Force Conference in June. Working in Bedford Hills Prison, the only women's state institution in New York State. Address: Jane Wilson NBFO, 415 Gramatan Ave. Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10552, tele. 914-664-6822 or 6557

Hopefully in the coming issues we will have more information to give you on all the N.B.F.O. branches working their way to become Chapters across the U.S. But for now you may contact:

In BOSTON: Demita Frazier, NBFO 26A Moultrie  
Dorchester, Mass. 02124

In CHICAGO: Brenda Eichelberger, NBFO  
4940 South East End Ave. 7C Chicago, Ill.  
60615 tele. 312-241-5598 or 752-5241

In DETROIT: Janet Salters, NBFO  
2467 Helen St. Detroit, Mich. 48207  
313-924-5604

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$$= \text{total of } 13$$

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